

**CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE
ON DISARMAMENT**

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Statement by Ambassador R. Caracciolo at the Informal Meeting
of the ENDC on 20 August 1969

First of all I should like to express my gratitude to the co-Chairmen for having accepted to convene this meeting for a preliminary discussion regarding the Committee's report to the XXIV session of the General Assembly and to thank all Delegations for graciously accepting this extra burden on their daily work. I should also like to avail myself of this opportunity to extend my warmest welcome to the Delegations that have joined our Committee more recently. This welcome applies, of course, to all the six new Delegations equally, with whose Governments, my own has the most friendly relations. May I add, however, in view of the very close collaboration existing between our respective Country in different fields, that we are particularly happy to see among us the Delegation of the Netherlands.

I will now try to explain to the Committee the reasons that have promoted me to address the request for this meeting on behalf of my Delegation.

The main reason stems from the feeling that our discussions have reached a crucial stage. Though we are confronted with more draft treaties than we have discussed before, on each of them the views of the nuclear delegations are still wide apart and we see at present few prospects for reaching any agreement before the end of this session. Therefore, despite the valuable efforts made during the present session and the concrete contributions of all delegations, the ultimate goal of our negotiations - which is actual disarmament, especially in the nuclear field - is still far from sight. Even if some progress were to be made in these last few weeks in one more specific field (and Italy would be among the firsts to welcome such development), it would very likely be progress towards an agreement on a non-armament measure rather than progress toward strictly disarmament measures.

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On the other hand, we are confronted with resolutions from the General Assembly and with the Agenda formulated by our very Committee, both of which clearly indicate the direction our work should take. In other words, there seem to be a certain gap between the work we are supposed to do and the one we are actually doing.

We are also approaching the moment when the valuable and important work we have done in 1969 will come under the scrutiny of the General Assembly. That body will have no other way to judge it, than by going through the final report submitted, as in previous years, by our Committee. I am afraid that a report of a factual character, that is a report mentioning only, in less or greater detail, the topics discussed, the meetings that have taken place, and the documents that have been submitted, would lend substance to the criticisms we have heard in the past, which imply that the structure of our Committee is not the most suitable one in order to fulfill the task that has been given to us. The very existence and the very survival of our Committee might then be jeopardized. We therefore believe, and we hope that this belief is shared by other delegations, that this year's report to UNGA should have a substantial character.

Another valid reason why the report to the XXIV Assembly should be this year, of a more positive character is the fact that our Committee has undergone a substantial enlargement with the addition of eight new members; this is a milestone in the history of the ENDC and, in our opinion, it should be marked by a renewed effort by the Committee to prove that real efforts are being made to come close to the expectation of mankind which still looks upon this body as a concrete hope for making progress along the hard but essential road to disarmament.

The important point is, therefore, to agree on what is meant by a substantial report.

As I said, before, I do not think that even a lengthy list of topics, of meetings, and of papers, would be sufficient to qualify our report as a substantial one, or that it would give the General Assembly that ray of hope it is entitled to, and is looking forward to. No doubt it will show that we have been very hard at work and that we have made great efforts during this year's session, but I am afraid that just would not be enough to inspire confidence on the results we may attain in the future. A substantial report would, in our mind, be achieved if besides synthesizing the core of our discussions and the difficulties we have met, we were to devote a certain part of it,

to some hard thinking on the shape and nature of our future activities. By doing so we would at least convey to the General Assembly our earnest conviction that though we have not been able so far, because of objective difficulties, to make substantial progress in the fields assigned to us, progress could be reasonably expected, in a not too distant future, through an improvement in our methods of work, coupled with a renewed determination on the part of our Governments.

The Italian Delegation has, for a long time, upheld the necessity of an organic programme of disarmament. By organic programme we meant something different and more precise than the provisional Agenda we agreed upon on 15 August 1968 exactly one year ago: the Agenda was, in part, mainly a list of headings for the members of the Committee to discuss. What we have in mind is a clearer definition of a programme of work, both short and long term.

Of course our intention never was to suggest a philosophical exercise or an academic discussion, nor did we ever think, that the pieces of this programme should be linked one to another with rigid ties to form a sort of a package deal.

The kind of programme we had in mind was instead a very flexible one, but one that could somehow provide the necessary guidelines for our future work and increase its efficiency. We are, in fact, fully aware of the tremendous difficulties which lie on the road to general and complete disarmament and which stem from the harsh facts of international life: mainly the necessity to maintain the balance of forces as a prerequisite to armament reductions. It is, however, undeniable that the search for an agreement on several specific sectors has made us lose, to a certain extent, the indispensable over-all view. And this is a dangerous fact since the balance of interests, which is the natural foundation of any agreement, is all the more difficult to achieve if the search for it is limited by the narrow framework of each specific measure. It was with the purpose of regaining this over-all view, of trying to bring our starting point closer to our final goal, that we tabled, at the last session, the working paper ENDC/245.

I would like to summarize the suggestions we submitted in our working paper in order to furnish a concrete example of the thoughts I am trying to express:

We first listed some of the basic premises of present ENDC negotiations; they are well known to everybody and therefore I need not dwell on them: it would be sufficient to quote the joint statement of agreed Principles for Disarmament negotiations submitted in September 1961 to the Geneva Conference by the Governments of the USA and

of USSR; the plans for general and complete disarmament submitted respectively by the Soviet and the American delegations on 15 March and on 18 April, 1962; Resolution 2454 B (XXIII) of the General Assembly; and the most significant promise of them all, that is art. VI of the N.P.T. by which the nuclear powers, as well as the other parties to the Treaty, undertook "to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control".

After having recalled these premises of our work, we expressed in our document the belief that the aim of ENDC negotiations, that is general and complete disarmament, could best be attained by a series of agreements to be reached in a suitable sequence - that is within the framework of an over-all programme - so as to guide the process of disarmament from the introductory stage to the final one. Though we did not deem it proper, at this stage, to anticipate detailed propositions we thought, only as a matter of suggestion - that a suitable sequence could proceed along the following lines which I will express in five points:

(1) Since a wide consensus seems to exist on the point that priority should be given to negotiations on interrelated subjects with a direct bearing on the problem of stopping the vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons by states now possessing them, we thought that within this framework, the beginning of bilateral talks between the Governments of the USA and USSR for the limitation of strategic armaments was, of course, of paramount importance.

(2) We then thought that in a preliminary stage new efforts should be made to carry on discussions in order to reach agreement on measures aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons to new environments where they have never been deployed, and at limiting the zones in which they may actually be deployed.

(3) In this same preliminary stage, we also thought that other measures might be negotiated in order to promote a climate of greater confidence among Nations. Such measures could apply to specified Parties, having particularly in view the situation prevailing in Europe as one of the focal points of international tension.

(4) After significant progress had been made towards the cessation of the nuclear arms race and the creation of an atmosphere of greater confidence, a first stage of concrete negotiations on actual disarmament could then take place.

(5) Subsequent negotiations on further stages, linked to one another and following the principle of gradual and balanced reductions, might then lead to the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament.

As I said these were the general thoughts that prompted my Delegation to introduce its working paper on 21 April. We never had the pretention that they could represent the only or a complete answer to the problems we mentioned; we only hoped that they could constitute an useful contribution to a general discussion on the subject.

Today we are confronted with a first draft report prepared by our co-Chairmen. While expressing the appreciation of my Delegation for the effort they have made in presenting us with a complete text in such a short time, and for giving us the opportunity to consider it with all the attention it deserves, I am sorry not to be in the position, as of today, to comment it in detail and to give our reactions. On the other hand, this meeting having been requested for the purpose of enabling all Delegations to participate in a preliminary discussion on the drafting of this Report, we shall certainly study, in the next few days, the text that has been submitted to us informally with the greatest attention, also in the light of the comments that other Delegations will wish to make.

I would also like to ask the Secretariat to circulate my statement of today as an official document of the Conference.